



Reading First *Lighthouse Schools*

Schools: Dysart, Kingswood, Luke, Surprise Dysart Elementary School District

Dysart has four schools in the Reading First Project Cycle II. Adriel Grieshaber, the Reading First Coordinator, was an experienced teacher and coach when the project started. She came into this project with the vision of creating a system of success for not only the Reading First Schools, but all schools in the district. In the past 2 1/2 years she has not only created systems to support Reading First Schools, she has taken it to AZ READS Schools through the Read to Succeed Program. The systems created in the areas of Leadership, Assessment, Instruction and Communication/Collaboration hold schools accountable not only by Adriel, but by the district administration.

Leadership:

In the Reading First Schools, each of the leaders have committed to the Reading First Program and the urgency that is necessary to implement and see student achievement. The leaders are involved in meetings that are solely based on Reading First professional development and findings from their schools. These meetings are held monthly and many of the topics are brought to the principal meetings in which all principals attend. The Reading First principals are looked upon to support best practices and research based reading instruction in these meetings as well as with interactions with others in the district. The leadership at each campus respects and values Adriel's expertise and leadership. In addition to this, teachers also value Adriel's knowledge and expertise. Adriel attends monthly meetings at the Reading First Sites as well as doing walkthroughs at all of the other sites with coaches and as part of the district administrative team. Adriel and the team attend all Reading First meetings and many trainings offered by ADE.

Assessment:

Schools in Dysart administer a multitude of assessments at each campus. The Reading First Schools have become well versed in how to use the data to guide instruction. The coaches on each campus are vigilant in ensuring that teachers are talking about data. Data meetings are happening at each site and the Reading First Coaches are also utilized as a support system for the Non Reading First Coaches in support of making data days work and how to structure team meetings based on data.

Instruction:

The Reading First Schools have worked very hard to ensure that teachers are teaching explicitly in order to increase reading achievement. The coaches, along with Adriel, have taken the motto of "go slow to go fast" in stride. In year one, the focus was on teaching the core explicitly. This was done through coaches modeling, grade level meetings and the intense support of the Houghton Mifflin representative Amy Combs. Teachers were expected to teach with fidelity and the coaches directed the majority of their coaching with teachers on the core whole group instruction. In year two, the expectation was that teachers would continue to teach explicitly whole group, but they were expected to begin having literacy workstations and pulling small

groups. The focus was on the practice of previously taught material in the stations and how to differentiate these stations according to students needs. The coaches spent a lot of time supporting teachers in this area during grade level meetings, coaching conversations, and planning with teachers. This year's focus is on small group instruction based on individual students. Coaches are working hard at supporting teachers in this area.

Communication:

Dysart has created a system that allows for many levels of communication and collaboration. At the district level, district leaders are out in schools doing walkthroughs on all campuses. They are visible on campus, as well as during district meetings and they are aware of what is happening on all campuses. The Reading First model has been implemented at all schools and campuses are held accountable. The principals receive professional development from WestEd, which is based on best practices and aligns with professional development given at Reading First meetings. All coaches also receive professional development in a variety of ways. All coaches attend monthly meetings with Adriel as well as with WestEd. The Reading First Coaches have worked on many professional development presentations and they are given to the other coaches, in addition to teachers. All coaches have been through the DIBELS Leadership Institute and LETRS.

Dysart is a great example of a Lighthouse District. They have created systems district-wide that are sustainable, even if funding of programs goes away. All stakeholders are speaking the same language and have the same expectations from their administration. Teachers are becoming more collaborative and this is largely from the hard work of the Reading First Coordinator and the key players at each Reading First School. Dysart's hard work and commitment to student achievement was recently acknowledged by the AZ Department of Education in the receipt of the 2008 Spotlight on Success Award. This award was in recognition of their Read to Succeed program in grades K-6, which is a model based on Reading First.